

**IRS LAUNCHES SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY WEB SITE,
FOCUSES ON SMALL BUSINESSES AND SELF-EMPLOYED**

WASHINGTON -- The Internal Revenue Service today unveiled a new small business community Web site as another sign of the agency's efforts to modernize and better serve America's taxpayers. IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti and Small Business/Self-Employed Division Commissioner Joe Kehoe made the announcement of this new Web site at the National Press Club in Washington.

With a vastly improved on-line service, the site launched today will specifically assist the nation's 45 million small-business and self-employed taxpayers with user-friendly assistance on an array of basic tax questions and issues. The site's focus is to improve service to small businesses and the self-employed, but also represent the first stage in revamping the entire site in ways that deliver on the agency's commitment to better serve its customers -- the American taxpayer.

"America's taxpayers want more 'clicks' than 'bricks' when dealing with the IRS," Kehoe said. "They want to be able to get service and information when they want it and where they want it. That's the beauty of the new Web site for small business and self-employed taxpayers."

According to the IRS, the new Web site is directly linked to the agency's new focus. Nearly three years ago, Congress passed the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, directing the agency to do a better job of meeting the needs of taxpayers. Since that time, the IRS launched an ambitious modernization plan to improve the entire way the agency works and insure that taxes are collected efficiently and fairly. The IRS has already reformed structurally around taxpayer needs, and many other improvements, including modernizing technology, are yet to come.

"We are very excited about this evolving on-line tool because we believe it underscores not only the important changes in practice at the IRS but the important change in tone as well," Rossotti said. "This new Web site demonstrates that the IRS is serious about serving its customers better and greatly improving the way we do business."

Sen. Christopher S. "Kit" Bond, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business, praised the effort.

"The IRS' new web site for the Small Business/Self-Employed Division is a great step forward in the agency's quest to provide better service to small-business taxpayers," Bond said. "With the paperwork and compliance burdens continuing to grow for America's small businesses, I applaud the IRS for making this new Internet resource available. Now, small-business owners can click on-line, answer questions, obtain forms, and stay up to date on tax issues quickly and easily."

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“Every minute we can save an entrepreneur from tax headaches is time that they can spend doing what they do best – running successful businesses and creating jobs in this country,” Bond said.

For now, the improvements to the Web site at www.irs.gov will focus on the small business and self-employed taxpayers. Visitors to the site will still see “The Digital Daily,” which has served as the IRS web portal since 1996, but will follow specific instructions to reach the business-specific content. Ultimately, the IRS will revamp the entire site with new sections and improved functionality for individual filers, large corporations and tax-exempt organizations.

Among the improvements for small businesses and self-employed taxpayers, the new site will:

- Provide taxpayers answers to many basic tax questions and a calendar of important deadlines.
- Provide on-line access to many IRS forms.
- Provide industry-specific tax information for the construction and restaurant industries, including helpful tips to avoid common tax problems.
- Provide news and events specific to new businesses as well as specific industry information for the construction and restaurant industries.
- Provide links to important federal and court opinions on tax issues as well as links to rulings and regulations affecting specific industries.
- Provide links to state tax information for all 50 states.
- Provide links to non-IRS sites for general tax information.
- Provide links to helpful small business resources.

“Whether you’re a doctor, a farmer, a home builder or a food server, our improved web site will give you and the millions of other small business and self-employed taxpayers the A-B-C’s of taxes and filing,” Kehoe said.

Access to this new Web site will be through the IRS’s home page at www.irs.gov. A button “link” that says “Small Business and Self-Employed Community” will connect directly to the site. For an alternative way to reach the site, click “Preview Our New Look” at the bottom of the www.irs.gov page, then click on either “Small Business” or “Self-Employed.”

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